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ABSTRACT

The exigencies of contemporary native American education require a thorough review. Issues considered in establishing a viable conceptual framework are Indian control of education, role of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Office of Indian Education, application of federal programs and appropriations, characteristics of the new generation of Indians, inclusion of Indian culture in the curriculum, utilization of public schools, newly recognized Indians, relationship to American education, and student needs and enrollments. Dimensions critical to developing a broader approach to Indian education are family and home, tribal culture, government, religion, economic-commercial, media, health, welfare, museums, justice-correctional, time, and educational agencies. Policies that could change the direction of education call for inclusion of all schools, Indian self determination, quality education, shared responsibility and involvement, and technical assistance. Practical applications include construction priorities, changes in the quality and quantity of information reflecting Indian education, strategies for improving school holding power, full utilization of school facilities, and educational evaluation. Conclusions indicate that schools providing educational services can no longer be isolated from Indian or American life, educational leaders must possess a new toleration and flexibility, BIA Indian Education has a new advocacy role, and Indian control of schools is becoming a reality. (NEC)

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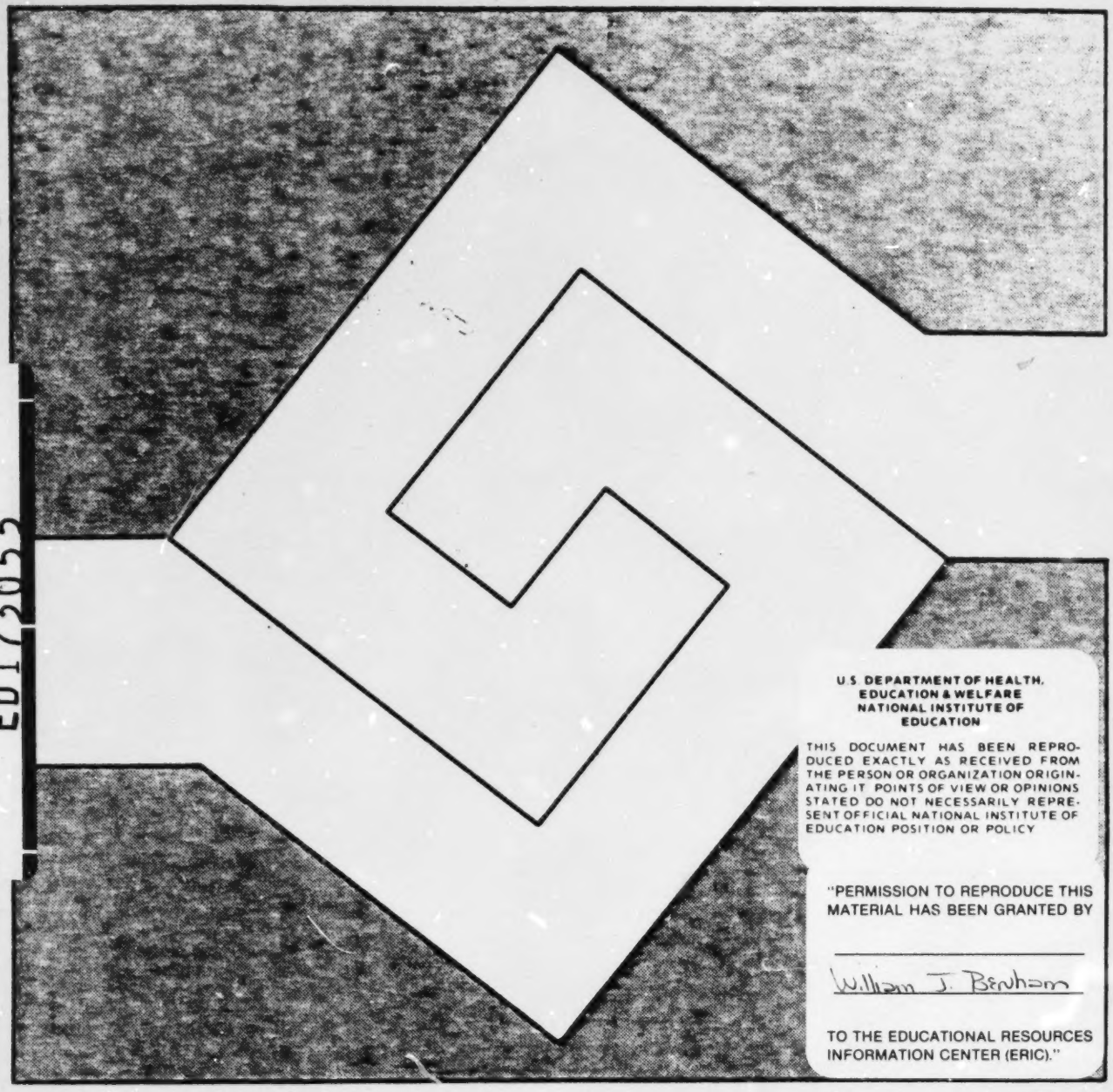

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# A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION

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*William J. Benham*

# A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO

# AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION

William J. Benham
Mid-Career Fellow in Public Affairs
The Woodrow Wilson School of
Public and International Affairs
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

February 1978

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# A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION

## INTRODUCTION - - - A CONTEMPORARY VIEW

The education of American Indian children and youth in recent times has been an important issue in American education. It has been discussed at the highest levels of the country and some of our most noted political and educational leaders have taken an active interest in it and have played important roles. There have been studies to the point that Indian education has reached the saturation point. It is therefore appropriate that some attention be paid to thinking through the contemporary situation with a view to synthesizing and providing some order to the total Indian education situation that will be helpful to policy development and program implementation.

Without appearing to be stilted and pedantic it is appropriate to define what is meant by education and Indian education. Considering the numerous definitions available, it is thought that none is as appropriate as the one used by Lawrence Cremin. He defines education as, "... the deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, or sensibilities, as well as any outcomes of that effort."[1] "Indian education" is the application of this definition to American Indians. As defined, education is conceived in the broader sense and the schools are but one educational institution among others. Other societal institutions involved in Indian education will be discussed in the part of this paper entitled "Dimensions of Indian Education." But first, it is important to present a philosophic foundation or framework in which Indian education should take place, and following this, to consider

factors that reflect change and provide meaning to the dynamic situation that characterizes contemporary Indian education.

Although this paper was written while the writer was serving as a Mid-Career Fellow in Public Affairs at Princeton University, the views expressed are his own.

William J. Benham
Princeton, New Jersey
February 20, 1978

## A PHILOSOPHY OF INDIAN EDUCATION

Philosophy has been defined as "an analysis of the grounds of and concepts expressing fundamental beliefs." Philosophy provides the "why" we do things just as methodology determines "how" we do things. Our philosophy provides overall guidelines that provide a basis for our actions. Thus, the set of beliefs or ideas we hold are of vital important because they provide a framework or guidelines for our later actions.

Perhaps the question comes to mind, "Why do we need a separate philosophy for Indian education?" One might be thinking that there is no real difference in a philosophy for Indian students and students in the general population. One might hold, with some justification, the belief that all education is concerned with the needs of students.

If these are the questions, be assure that you are absolutely correct--up to a point. However, it is contended that each person serving Indian students, either totally or partially, should come up with or develop a philosophy of Indian education. This feeling is held because this serves to accentuate the fact that Indian students have cultural differences which affect the development of potential and have problems and disadvantages which, in many ways, cause them to stand aside from the general population. These disadvantages and differences exist to such an extent that if "equal education" for Indian students is the goal of the education program, special handling is required--and a set of beliefs or ideas for such handling is necessary. While this is my contention, let me be quick to say that

in a broad context, it is believed that the needs of children in general are the same, but sometimes there exists a real difference in the degree of need. It is felt that this is true of Indian students.

Thus, this is a justification for a set of beliefs or a philosophy of Indian education. Such a philosophy will fit all students, but it will particularly fit the major problems Indian people face in today's world. Also, such a philosophy could be drawn up in a hundred different forms, but, desirably it should be brief so that it is intellectually digestible and becomes a part of our thinking process and can be remembered rather easily. This is vital to those of us who are specifically concerned with the education of Indian students.

Here is a set of beliefs or a proposed philosophy of Indian education:

1. Education should provide the Indian student with all basic scholastic tools essential to the pursuit of learning in the modern world. This would, of course, include the ability to read, write, and to compute--or the three R's; but there is an important addition. The addition is a good, solid foundation in English capability essential to learning in today's world. We cannot escape the need for special attention to English capability. It illustrates that special "something" that Indian students need.

2. Education should provide him with a profound understanding that leads to a deep appreciation of himself, his society, and the world in which he lives. This belief is expressed by design and not by accident. The Indian student may have a background which leads to

an undesirable self-image or a self-image that is not up to par. If he cannot see his background as a part of a proper self-image, then education has failed in its task. Actually, he may have been better off to have not been exposed to it. We must prepare students to become what they will--we must give the student a chance to decide. In doing this, we must recognize the scriptural admonition, "Remember the quarry from which you were dug, the rock from whence ye were hewn," as it applies to the heritage of Indian students.

3. Education should provide the Indian student with the development of his ability to think critically and plan effectively within his environment. Why is this important? Because this fits into the last developmental task which is to develop his own set of beliefs or philosophy of life. It is another way of saying that education should not only provide him with knowledge but should develop his wisdom to use it. It further ties into the school of the future where conflicts must be resolved as a part of the educative process.

4. Education should encourage his creativity. It should develop his taste for fine things in regard to art and music. It should cultivate his talents in this regard. All should realize, however, that his talent might take a different turn from the established norm because of a different cultural background. By all means, let us all be wise enough to recognize the unusual child and encourage his creativity in whatever form it takes.

5. Education should prepare him for successful living. Indeed, it should give him a skill or many skills which would enable him to

find success in a vocation, profession or avocation. It should prepare him for utilizing occupational opportunities which will provide him with the livelihood for living the "good life" as he has defined it.

6. Education for the Indian child should profoundly involve his parents and his tribe for direction, for coordination and for support.

Combined with the above, the serious attempts being made at some schools to help transmit a small part of the cultural heritage of the Indian child should be enlarged and extended. This is needed to even a greater degree for the education of the Indian child than would appear to be needed in considering the education of his counterpart in the general population. This is true because in the latter, it is well accepted that the school is a cultural transmission instrument. A minority student in a majority society may have fewer social institutions which are supportive of his culture. Thus, an additional burden for the minority culture falls on the school.[2]

## IMPORTANT FACTORS IN CONTEMPORARY INDIAN EDUCATION

One important aspect of Indian education is the decision making process and setting. In past times the setting for decision making was simpler than it is today. Previously, Indian education was primarily a function of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Education decisions flowed from the top to the school community level of operation. BIA professional educators were managers of the education activity. Education decisions were conceived and carried out within this structure.

The decision making setting and process of today is much different from that of twenty or thirty years ago. Yet, all too frequently decisions continue to be made assuming that over the decades little has changed. One important point to be made in this paper is that decisions in contemporary Indian education take place in a setting that is characterized by complexity and change. Complexity emanates from the new setting and change emanates from the developing or evolving nature of contemporary Indian education. In the true sense of the term, contemporary Indian education has unique dynamics which are intimately related to the decision making process. Understanding this dynamic quality is important to Indian education decision makers.

In order to explore the dynamics of contemporary Indian education, factors which reflect change have been identified. However, as with all human centered activities, change is seldom abrupt and sudden. Change evolves slowly and vestiges of past habits will be mixed with

the new. With this in mind, significant factors which reflect changes in Indian education are discussed as follows:

1. Self-Determination of Indian Control of Education: The true sense of Indian self-determination means Indian control of education (schools). Where there is not actual Indian control, such as in a public or BIA school, it signifies Indian influence and direction. In both cases, self-determination means a departure from past times wherein Indian control was not a consideration. One basic implication of self-determination for Indian education pertains to technical services to tribes which control their schools or wish to control them. More is said of technical services in factor number 12. It is important to note that a Federal law, Public Law 93-638, has been passed in support of Indian Self-Determination.

2. Two Federal Agencies for Indian Education: There are now two Federal agencies charged with responsibilities in the education of Indian children. BIA has continued its responsibilities and the Indian Education Act of 1972 established the Office of Indian Education in the U.S. Office of Education (USOE) in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). The service population of the two Indian education agencies overlap.

3. General Application of Federal Programs to Indians: Starting in the 1960's with the Great Society programs of Preside ...son, general program support to the poor and the educationally disadvantaged was extended to Indian tribes living on reservations. This move made it possible for Federal agencies other than BIA to deal directly with

tribal governments, groups of Indians or the BIA in carrying out their programs. In past times Indian tribes dealt primarily with the BIA and state governments. Now, they deal with a multitude of agencies and a massive array of potential help is presented to them in the form of Federal programs.

4. Increased Education Appropriations: Recently, there have been reviews done of Indian education which report that the BIA appropriations went from 13 million dollars in Fiscal Year 1950 to 255 million dollars in Fiscal Year 1978.[3] This does not include appropriations to the USOE Indian Education Office.

5. New Generation of Indians: The power structure within the greater national Indian population is commanded by a new generation of Indians who are better educated and possess a keen understanding and appreciation of American society and politics. Unlike their less well educated and experienced predecessors, this new generation uses the American system to advocate Indian rights. Regarding education, they have a deep appreciation of its benefits and place it in a high priority. The new generation of Indians possesses the psychological edge in Indian affairs in general and Indian education in particular. Being sensitive to and aware of the power of the psychological edge has great meaning to the Indian education situation and adds great complexity to policy development and program implementation.

It is also important to note that the Indian population is increasing at a rate greater than any other segment of the general population. While the peak enrollment of school children nation-wide has been reached

(in 1969 for elementary students and 1976 for secondary schools), the number of school age children for many Indian tribes continues to show modest increases (based on Indian Health Service Indian population tables). Indians are about ten percent younger than the general population and peak school enrollments in some tribes may not be reached for several years. Additionally, the shift in Indian population is from rural to urban with the majority of Indians currently living in cities. Even so, the population on reservations is increasing.[4]

6. Better Educated Indian Population: The Indian population is better educated than ever before. The average number of years of schooling for Indians increased from 8.4 in 1960 to 9.8 in 1970. This general increase in education level is augmented by a dramatic increase in college attendance and graduation. Approximately 17,000 Indians attended colleges and universities during the school year 1976-77 and approximately 1,600 graduated from college during this same school year. Increasingly, Indians are entering the professions and are becoming the decision makers in Indian education.[5]

7. Indian Education Research: There is available an abundance of research data that reflects Indian education. Research data on Indian education is growing. Even with the abundance of research data and its continued growth, some basic needs in research are not being addressed. These research needs represent gaps in the data base that are frequently crucial and ultimately retard the decision making process. In relationship to education research and the availability of some data, decision making in Indian education has extremes in that

there will be an abundance of good data in one part of the enterprise and a total lack in another. The two greatest needs are for research data that is longitudinal which involves single cohort subjects and on-going, routine evaluation data. Current data on Indian education is characterized by one time, cross-sectional studies which are primarily descriptive. While these are helpful, they are not sufficient.

Decision making in Indian education has historically been deductive with a stated policy as the point of departure. Therefore, the habit of utilizing research data in the decision making process has not developed. What is required in contemporary Indian education is the use of available research findings in the decision making process. A rigorous and comprehensive education research program should be undertaken that includes longitudinal single cohort studies, as well as the descriptive studies. It should be pointed out that this is not an "either-or" approach. The descriptive studies should be continued but in a balanced relationship to longitudinal studies.

8. Indian Culture and Indian Education: One of the most widespread and significant curriculum changes reflected in contemporary Indian education is the inclusion of the Indian culture in the school program. Indian culture assumes many forms in the contemporary school program including bilingual education, art, dress, belief systems, American History from the Indian point of view, studies of tribal governmental processes, and general Indian studies. The term "bicultural-bilingual" is common in most schools enrolling a majority of Indian children. A retired BIA educator who was prominent in the 1950's and

1960's recently had this to say about Indian culture and the schools:

> It is time for school people, whether of BIA, public, or denominational schools, to admit they have been remiss (and this needs to be said by someone who has been a part of the establishment) in not being sensitive enough to the bicultural needs of Indian people. Indian people do need to know about their history, their heroes, and the current affairs of the tribe...[6]

9. Public Schools and Indian Education: Contemporary school enrollment figures reflect that 72 percent of the total Indian population served by the BIA send their children to public schools, about 23 percent to Federal schools and the remainder to private schools, including tribally controlled and operated schools. It is estimated that 175,000 Indian children will attend public schools during the 1977-78 school year. In 1930, 38,000 Indian children attended public schools. The increased utilization of public schools by Indian parents comes as no surprise as American education has been and remains a state rather than a Federal responsibility.[7]

10. Congressional Interests: There has always been Congressional oversight of Federal education programs for Indian children and youth. This is just one indication of the interest and concern Congress has in Indian affairs. In contemporary times Congressional oversight has become more frequent and detailed. Congress has investigated almost every phrase of Indian education within the past ten years. This has resulted in studies and re-studies of the same issues of Indian education. Along with this new closer interest has come the companion factor of accountability. Managers of Indian education are increasingly being called upon by the Congress to account for their actions.

11. Newly Recognized Indians: Within the past five years, Federal education services to Indians have expanded dramatically. The creation of the USOE Office of Indian Education extended categorical education aid to American citizens who identified themselves as Indians. USOE estimates that this added 140,000 Indian children to the total Federal responsibility. Recently, one terminated Tribe, the Menominee, has been reinstated and again made eligible for services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. For the Fiscal Year 1977 and the school year 1976-77, the Bureau of Indian Affairs recognized the Passamaquoddy and the Penobscot Tribes of the State of Maine as being eligible for services. In a budget request to the Congress and Bureau estimated that this added 430 more eligible Indian students, most of them attending Maine public schools.

It is also important that the recent report of the American Indian Policy Review Commission devoted a section to non-Federally recognized tribes. At the time of the Commission's Report, the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot Tribes were not Federally recognized.[8]

12. Technical Services in Education: Contemporary times reflect an unprecedented need for technical services in education. While there has always been such a need, contemporary times related this need directly to the policy of self-determination and Indian control of education. A clear definition and delineation of the types of services are yet to be made but it is probable that they will be in the area of tribal management of education (educational administration),

curriculum development, research and evaluation, training, and all aspects of educational planning. Contemporary Indian education decision making will have to include a close look at technical services in education.

13. Relationship to American Education: American education will continue to play an important part in Indian education. It should be remembered that one of the major recommendations of the Meriam Report was to professionalize the education personnel of the BIA.[9] Since the Report's release in 1928, the education staff of the BIA has been professionalized until there is little difference between Federal and public schools. The important aspect of the relationship between Indian and American education is that contemporary times call for a stronger influence of the Indian lifeways in the total education enterprise.[9]

14. Indian Educators: It should be noted that the professionalization of Indian education carries a companion need for Indian educators. There is clear evidence of the desire on the part of Indian communities to train more of their young people to return and teach among Indians. It is also noteworthy that some of the more successful teacher training programs have enrolled Indian community members who are paraprofessionals. These programs bring university extension courses to the reservation during the school year with on-campus training at the college or university during the summer terms. The outcome, in time, is an upgrading to the professional level and a degree.

15. Inductive vs Deductive Approach to Indian Education: it was noted above that historically, a deductive approach was taken to Indian

education policy and the implementation of programs; that is, policy originated in Washington and was passed down to the tribal level. Usually, there was little or no tribal input to policy and program development in Indian education. Contemporary times reflect a need for an inductive approach that emanates from the tribe upward to Washington. In the inductive serse, the identified educational needs of the tribes will provide the foundation for Indian education policy.

To utilize and place priority on an inductive approach to policy development does not mean that Washington initiated policies and programs will no longer be possible, practical or necessary. Indeed, the Federal Government will continue to play a vital role in Indian education by virtue of the fact that federal monies will continue to be the prime support for Indian education. There will, however, be a need for a better balance between Washington initiatives and tribal initiatives. The emergence of tribal initiatives as the foundation of Indian education is the innovation.

16. Indian Student Needs: Presenting the educational needs of students in the latter part of the discussion of important contemporary education factors was deliberate. All of the factors mentioned above focus on the Indian child in the community-school setting. Much has been said about the extraordinary needs of students and their primacy to all other factors in contemporary Indian education is the point to be stressed.[10]

17. School Enrollments of Indian Children: Though enrollments have been mentioned elsewhere in this paper, it is important to focus on them in order to gain a clearer picture of the current situation.

First, the state-of-the-art in Indian demographics has not changed much since the Europeans first set foot on North American soil. We are still operating with estimates, most of which are reasonably accurate, but still in need of basic improvement. It is significant that there are practically no basic demographic studies and research of American Indian populations. Planning which is based on established demographic data is not possible with Indian people, except in a few small isolated instances. Regarding education, the best and most reliable statistics to use are school enrollments.

Enrollments in BIA schools peaked in 1972 (57,788) and have been declining since that time. The largest decline is in boarding schools (Fiscal Year 1972: 30,317 and Fiscal Year 1976: 24,738). On the other hand, public school enrollments have had a steady forty-five year increase starting with 38,000 Indian children in 1930 to 129,000 in 1970 and 155,430 in 1975. Also, Indian controlled schools are increasing and for the current school year they reflect an enrollment of approximately 4,000 students. In summary, Federal school enrollments are declining, particularly boarding schools, and have been declining since 1972. On the other hand public schools and Indian controlled schools have increased enrollments. Enrollment trends are extremely important to the new directions BIA Indian Education must consider.

The following part of this paper will deal with a discussion of education in contemporary Indian education communities and will provide an additional dimension that is necessary for an adequate conceptual framework.

## DIMENSIONS OF INDIAN EDUCATION

The definition of education presented earlier is broad and includes those societal institutions that perform an educational function. Several other educational institutions play important roles in the lives of Indian children, but the schools play a unique one. There are certain skills, attitudes, and knowledge related to modern life that are learned only in the schools. Likewise, there are certain skills, knowledge, and attitudes that can only be acquired in the family setting. There are a number of educational influences in the lives of Indian children and it is important that a discussion of education attempts to take all of them into consideration.

The main reason for taking the broader approach to education is that it is more realistic. Education is intimately involved and related to the lives of children and it is important that it be conceived in a manner that takes this fact into consideration. Education is not one dimensional, as is so frequently thought in Indian education. For instance, most evaluation and research studies in Indian education rely solely on standardized achievement tests or dropouts or cultural studies as a single measure of education effectiveness. Education practitioners know that a single dimension approach to education is woefully inadequate.

It therefore appears appropriate, in the true sense of education, to take a broader approach to deal effectively with the complexities and dynamics of contemporary Indian education.

It is also important to point out that educational institutions that play a part in Indian education overlap and are interrelated

Frequently, they pull the child in different directions. Also, they frequently pull together to teach skills, attitudes and habits of behavior. They are interrelated but yet different enough in their totality to be separate and distinct. However, all perform an educational function. As an example, traditionally, Indian people believed that the schools and an education served to separate the child from the family. While this may have been the case in past times, the schools and the family must work toward common goals and objectives in the world of today. Even so, the stereotypical relationship of the past still has a residual effect that must be overcome.

As with all peoples, American Indians have always had their educational institutions. Traditionally, before Columbus, although the Indian people did not have formalized schools, they have always educated their young.

As noted the relationship between schools and the Indians has been important to the success of the schools and to the success of the Indians. Initially, European colonists used the schools as civilizing agents and they therefore represented distinct non-Indian institutions that were essentially forced on the Indians. The earliest schools were deliberately non-Indian. Some contemporary critics of schools and education have claimed that this non-Indian nature of schools and education has caused Indians to be reluctant to accept the role and function of schools. Schools traditionally remained outside the lives of Indians, yet, as the United States evolved, they have become necessary

to survival. Educated Indians are better equipped to fight effectively to protect cherished Indian lifeways and possessions. In this respect contemporary American Indians need as much education as they can get. They need as much formal education as they can get.

The discussion of the dimensions of Indian education, which follows is presented in random order. It is not a complete listing of education institutions, rather, it presents a sufficient number to make the point that Indian education is multi-dimensional with schools playing a vital and unique part.

A. Family and Home: The family and home are basic and key educational institutions in the life of the Indian child. To include the family and home in the concept of education is an innovation in the history of Indian education. Some attempts to do so were made in the Thirties but the effort was not sustained. Recognition by the education establishment of the educational importance of the Indian family is necessary to a realistic view of the contemporary situation. It should also be noted that the early childhood education programs in Indian communities have become very popular. It is contended that a part of this popularity stems from the intimate involvement of parents in the program. Indians control the early childhood education programs. Consequently, some of the factors of Indian education discussed earlier have evolved from the early childhood education programs for Indian children. The educational influence of the family and home starts with prenatal life and continues throughout life.

B. Tribal Culture: The tribes as an institution exerts great educational influence, thus serves an educational role. The fact that self-determination extends important measures in education control to Indians means that the educational influence of the tribal culture will become greater than has previously been the case. It also means that the extent of tribal cultural influence in the school program will be controlled by the tribe.

C. Government: The institution of government is extensive in the lives of Indian people. It includes the tribal, federal, state, county and municipal governments. Technically, schools are an agency of one or more of these governments. However, the definition of this dimension pertains to non-school functions and programs of the various governments, such as law and order, welfare and health, as related to education. The unordered and uncoordinated influence of governments on the education of Indian children is extremely important to the understanding of contemporary Indian education.

An important development during the 1960's was the extension of federal programs other than BIA to Indian reservations. In almost all instances, the other federal agencies, such as Housing and Urban Development, began to work directly with the tribes and their representatives without coordinating with the BIA and other federal programs. Another complicating development of this already complex situation was the revenue sharing program which passed funds to local governments without categorical restrictions. Tribal governments participated in the revenue sharing programs in a number of ways.

The essence of this dimension is to point out the key education function played by governments in the lives of Indian children. It is a complex and often confusing situation to Indians and educators. Contemporary Indian education must give serious consideration to the influence of all government non-school education programs.

D. Religion: Religion refers to all religions. Christian religions have played a key role in the education of Indian children since colonial times. Indeed, it was the churches which first decided to use the schools to Christianize the Indians. There are other religions such as the beliefs and practices of the tribe, as well as, other groups (primarily Baha'i's) that are working in Indian communities. Several Christian demoninations continue to operate schools specifically for Indian children.

E. Economic - Commercial: Commercial interests have, like the churches, always played a key role in the education of Indian children. Trade with the Indians has traditionally been an important part of the American economy. As Indians enter the job market and fathers bring home the knowledge of their jobs, or as energy needs impinge on the lives of Indians, economics will continue to play an important Indian education function and role and schools must recognize its basic influence on the lives of Indian children.

F. Media: Media includes television, radio, movies, books, newspapers, and telephone. There are perhaps other aspects of media not mentioned, but certainly these do play important educational roles in the lives of Indian children. Technically, media has been put

to good educational uses over the past thirty years. However, the larger share of media is outside the control and influence of the school and comes freely into the Indian home. The non-school educational influence of media is an important issue in the United States in general. It is suggested that its influence on the education of Indian children is perhaps greater than that on the average non-Indian child.

G. Health - Medical: Since the coming of Europeans to America, the health of the Indian population has been an issue. In recent decades the health of Indians has improved. Much of the improvement can be attributed to the influence of the health education programs of the medical profession. It is not surprising that government health agencies employ large numbers of educators who work solely on the health education of Indian people. Recognition of this educational influence in contemporary Indian education is necessary.

H. Welfare: Anyone who has worked at the reservation or community level with Indian peoples knows how strong is the educational influence of welfare agencies and their personnel. This includes federal, state, county, municipal and tribal welfare agencies. Because many Indian people are poor and their lands remain largely undeveloped, welfare plays an important role in their lives. A strong relationship to these influential agencies is necessary in contemporary Indian education.

I. Museums, Culture Centers, Pow-Wows: It is difficult to find a single term to use regarding this type of institution. Their existence is evidence enough to show they play an important educational role.

Special importance should be given to culture centers that are being established by the tribes. These centers reflect the cooperative or tribal efforts of Indian people and they are stocked and operated with sensitivity to the traditions of the tribe. Pow-Wows are popular with the young Indian people. They may not be considered particularly wholesome by many educators, but they do play an important educational role.

J. Justice - Correctional: Justice systems, tribal, federal, state, county, municipal, play educational roles in the lives of Indian children. The inclusion of this dimension does not imply that all Indian children will be negatively affected by the various justice systems. It does mean, however, that the systems do play important educational roles in contemporary Indian education.

K. Time: It is impossible to think about contemporary Indian education without including a dimension of time. All too frequently time is not given proper consideration. For example, before bilingual education for Indians was implemented it was strongly believed that it could be achieved in a short time. Experience has shown that Indian bilingual education takes years to implement. Many of the necessary innovations in Indian education can only be achieved by allowing sufficient time to develop them. They are not easy and cannot be realized overnight. Important to the dimension of time is the fact that over the long haul, it takes extraordinary financial support to develop Indian education innovations. The long-term nature of Indian education innovation and the great expense of them cannot be fully

understood without including a serious consideration of time. On the other hand, without serious consideration of time, relatively unimportant and superficial tasks may be programmed to usurp the time and financial support of more serious and more deserving matters. Consideration of time is necessary.

L. Schools and Education Agencies: Schools have their unique education function and role to play and a realization of this is important. It is important inasmuch as recent movements in American education, such as deschooling, tended to imply that schools no longer have an important role, especially in the lives of the disadvantaged and poor. Recent careful and scholarly reviews of the role and function of the schools again reaffirm that they are vital to survival in modern American society. Schools also are vital to the survival and happiness of contemporary American Indians. This does not mean that the schools of twenty or thirty years ago will suffice for contemporary Indian education. Indeed, the purpose of this paper rests on the belief that the traditional school must change to meet the contemporary needs of American Indian children. Schools are still vital and necessary but they must make adjustments to meet contemporary Indian education needs.

## INDIAN EDUCATION POLICY---SOME NEW DIRECTIONS NEEDED

The preceding parts of this paper lay the basis for some serious considerations regarding new policies in BIA Indian education. In thinking through the new policies a series of relationships were drawn from existing facts, problems, and desired outcomes. For instance, immediate problems identified related to education information, school construction, funding, school holding power and etc. Then, the question was asked, "What policies are needed to effectively deal with the problems?" A broad and comprehensive approach to policy statements was taken so there would be a limited number of policies to deal with the total, complex scope of Indian education. The result was five basic policy statements which are presented below with a brief discussion of each statement.

Policy #1: Include All Schools

The Bureau of Indian Affairs will support the education of American Indian children and youth in all school situations (public, tribal contract, private and federal) to the fullest extent under its operating authorities.

Historically, the BIA has focused its major attention on the education program in federal schools and has paid little attention to Indian children who attend public schools. In fact, for a period of a few years in the early 1960's the BIA discontinued keeping enrollment data on Indian children in public schools and thereby implied that all was well so long as an Indian child was in a public school. Recently

it has been shown that public schools may not be doing an effective job with some segments of the Indian population and some assistance and sharing would be helpful.

The contemporary situation reflects a need for the BIA to give special attention to all Indian children regardless of the schools they attend. This policy will require several changes in the BIA program both in organization and attitude.

As a starter the Bureau, through its multiple contacts with members of the Congress, should urge priority consideration of needed construction aid funds for public school districts educating reservation Indian children. The most recent estimate (November 18, 1977) of USOE officials of the backlog of firm and tentative priority projects is $290,327,053 involving some 130 public school districts. The Kennedy Report recommended priority funding to public schools under the authority provided under P.L. 815, as amended. This has not been done and construction backlog increases yearly. There is additional authority to fund needed public schools educating reservation Indian children under Title II, P.L. 93-638. This has not been done to the fullest extent.

Policy #2: Indian Self-Determination in Education

Indian Self-Determination in education will be supported in all respects with special attention to: requirements contained in Public Law 93-638; Indian involvement in all education programs; and to the development of professional Indian educators to administer Indian education.

It is important to realize that Indian Self-Determination is beyond the dicussion stage and is in the implementation process. It is

incumbent on the BIA education officials to understand the implications of Self-Determination for Indian advocacy. The initiative is with the tribes. The education policies of Indian tribes are the education policies of the BIA. This also means that the number of educators hired by the BIA will diminish. Self-determination also means that regardless of the school, public or federal, meaningful Indian involvement is a requirement. Indian self-determination creates a strong demand for qualified Indian professionals to operate Indian schools for Indian children.

One word of caution---there are limitations to the authorities granted Indians under the Self-Determination Act. These should be identified clearly. While the Act does provide for Indian determinations in public school programs when federal funds are accepted under the amendments to the Johnson-O'Malley Act, it does not provide for retrocession; that is, take over of public schools. Neither does it obligate the Federal government to construct either BIA or contract schools when seats are available in existing public schools.

Policy #3: Quality Education

Effective leadership, excellence in education and quality of instruction will be major concerns of BIA education as concerns all Indian children and youth for whom it has a responsibility.

At one time initial efforts were made to coordinate activities of leadership personnel in all schools and school systems serving a single tribe. Much of this has been lost. The BIA should help

create the circumstances that would lead to excellence in Indian education through effective leadership. This might be done by better procedures for sharing proven educational innovations, research findings that point to better methods in program development and in mutual monitoring of education activities wherever they take place. Particular attention should be given to BIA staff in-service training. This policy is a major dimension of policies stated in #1 and #2.

Policy #4: Share Responsibility and Involvement

An approach of shared responsitility in education programs and decisions will be taken by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the education of Indian children.

The new era in Indian education finds a host of governmental agencies involved in educating Indian children. Federal, state, county, city, and tribal governments are involved in educating Indian children. It has been previously pointed out that two primary Federal offices and Departments are now involved in educating Indian children. There are a multitude of other federal program offices which offer potential support to Indian communities. In contemporary times no single agency can more forward in Indian education without relating to others.

Perhaps most important are the new attitudes and activities of the Federal Congress regarding the administration of programs, especially Indian education. Congress has more and different staff capabilities than heretofore has been the case. Administration employees frequently have their positions and back-up data challenged by Congressional staff

members. What is needed is a new type of relationship not only to the various governmental agencies but especially to the Congress and Congressional committee staff members. A close liaison in many long-range decisions will be required.

One other important institution to include in the policy of shared responsibility is the Indian family. As past efforts have shown the schools cannot shoulder sole responsibility for the education of the child. Meaningful involvement of the Indian parent in the school program is essential.

Policy #5: Technical Assistance, Evaluation and Research

The Bureau of Indian Affairs will assist in meeting the contemporary needs of Indian education by providing technical assistance in educational evaluation and research, curriculum development and general information.

The technical support function of the BIA is a growing part of the education program. As federal school operations continue to diminish, technical support should be available in evaluation, research and curriculum expansion as related to both public and tribal controlled schools. A key ingredient will be the improved and expanded computer capability as related to all Indian children regardless of the school which they attend.

All the policies are inter-related and focus on the improvement of educational services to Indian children.

## SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF NEW POLICIES TO CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS

Construction Priorities: The need for prioritizing results when appropriations are insufficient to meet the cost of construction to fully justified projects. At present an enormous backlog exists of needed construction to meet the regulatory requirements pertaining to health, safety and handicapped codes. All tribes with justified construction needs feel their projects should come first.

As the backlog has increased, greater attention has been given to actual construction priorities by the Department of Interior, the Office of Management and Budget, the Congress and the tribes.

At this point, perhaps the best approach to the way out is (1) the development of a thorough and complete resume of all fully justified projects, (2) a proposed 10-year construction "catch up" program and (3) a new look at construction priorities based on the best possible definitions of urgency of need. To be effective, the latter must be developed from input and understanding of the Committees of Congress along with the tribes.

Utilizing an approach of share responsibility coupled with the improvement in the scope and quality of data collected would do much to solve the increasing problem of construction priorities.

Education Information: The quality and quantity of information reflecting Indian education has been insufficient and several affected users including the Congress, Department of Interior, Indian tribes, Office of Management and Bueget, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs

itself have called for urgent improvement of the situation. It seems apparent that the good available information being produced should be continued. Data gaps should be identified and immediate steps should be taken to remedy the situation.

The BIA has developed and implemented a computerized student accounting system. One accomplishment of the computer system is the elimination of duplicate accounting of students. Under the old system a student was counted, for total enrollment purposes, at each school he might have attended during the school year. Under the new computer program each student is assigned a number that follows him to any BIA or contract school that he might attend at any time. This system is now in its third year of operation and has improved in accuracy. It is projected that at the end of five years of operation the system will approach complete accuracy. The system now includes federal and tribal controlled schools. An immediate step that can be taken is to extend the existing system to public schools. The forms for the system would require only minor modifications. If work were started in early 1978, public schools could be included in school year 1978-79. This would have important and impressive implications regarding policies and directions of the Bureau.

Improving School Holding Power: A key variable in the success of Indian people in life is the number of years of formal schooling completed. Their chances of assuming responsible positions in the communities of their choice are improved with each year of school. Self-determination has made increased demands for more schooling with

emphasis on Indians trained in the professions (college graduates). It is reasonable to focus on this one factor in a school program and to provide technical support in whatever strategies seem appropriate for a particular school. Whatever it takes for a school to increase the holding power so that Indian children and youth will remain in school should likewise become the thrust of the Bureau's education program.

It should be pointed out that improving school holding power is directly related to improving the overall quality of the education program. It is assumed that the Indian child or youth will not want to stay in a school program that is ineffective and of poor quality. Past experiences have shown that Indian parents certainly will not support poor quality education.

Improving the school holding power by emphasizing high quality education is a reasonable thrust especially if the role of the BIA is one of technical assistance to local Indian controlled efforts. It is important to realize that determination of curriculum under this policy remains in the hands of local Indians. If they decide to implement an early childhood education program or bilingual education, then it is the obligation of the BIA education personnel to support them. Whatever works at the local level to improve the quality of education and the school holding power is what the BIA should support.

This program thrust would apply to <u>all</u> schools enrolling Indian children. Strategies will have to be developed immediately which create a positive relationship and program regarding Indian children in public, BIA and tribal contract schools.

Full Utilization of School Facilities: This problem that has perplexed Congress, the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Interior, the BIA and tribes concerns the use being made of school facilities. Some reports to the Congress have stated that there are unused school facilities due to decreasing enrollment of Indian children in BIA schools. This reported under use of facilities is related to the lack of Congressional appropriations for new facilities in recent years.

On the other hand, the Congress has provided enormous sums of money for special programs all of which require additional space for language and math labs, audio-visual facilities, special program rooms, and facilities for the handicapped. Space rquirements have changed rapidly.

A recent space utilization study on the Navajo Reservation shows that under utilization of space is largely in the dormitories and is related to declining boarding school enrollments. Some of the unused space is being used by the public school, adult education groups and by the Tribe.

What is needed at this point is (1) space utilization data in relation to space needs for effective program development in all areas, and (2) uniform guidelines for use of space no longer needed at BIA facilities.

Again the policy of shared responsibility should be applied to seeking the best possible ways of utilizing existing space at BIA schools and innovative uses of any unneeded space for school purposes.

Management Strategies: Once new policies have been established it is imperative that management strategies be developed immediately.

This would no doubt involve consideration of organizational structures as well as staffing to carry out the program. One thing seems clear---- Bureau of Indian Affairs Education organization, program thrusts, management strategies, and training must be in keeping with a realistic and meaningful application of Indian self-determination.

The situations facing the Bureau in the 1980's are different and changing. Indian education must deal with the contemporary situations and plan for the probable conditions of the future. Contemporary times indicate needs and conditions that can only be solved with a better assessment of current facts and effective methods to pursue them.

Educational Evaluation: In a sense, this should be called school effectiveness. It is readily apparent that the points discussed relate to improving the quality of education. A first step toward improving effectiveness will be to describe what is meant by it. Next, evaluation strategies should be developed and fully implemented. Self-evaluation by schools will be necessary. As noted, a key to evaluation will be the computerized information that all schools will maintain. It is important to point out that the technical aspects of quality education and the evaluation of it are within the reach of BIA education. What is needed is to place priority on them.

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The exigencies of contemporary Indian education require a thorough review and a new look at the way education is conceived and carried out. This paper is an attempt to establish a viable conceptual framework for dealing effectively with contemporary issues in Indian education.

One obvious conclusion is that schools of today that provide educational services to American Indians can no longer be isolated. They cannot be isolated from the mainstream of American Indian life nor can they be isolated from the mainstream of American life. Educational leaders need to understand this new setting and they also need to know how to work effectively within it. Gone are the days when the Indian school was essentially an island unto itself.

It also seems that the educational leaders of contemporary Indian affairs must possess a new toleration and flexibility. They must be more tolerant of innovations and effective practices. Whether the educational leader is Indian or non-Indian, broadness and flexibility of approach are necessary. They must seek the active participation of Indians in the school program. These are dynamic times and as such, patience and continued efforts to improve and change are required.

There is an advocacy role to be played by BIA Indian Education. In this sense, Indian education leaders have new loyalties to develop that reflect a viable relationship between the school and the Indian family and community. On the other hand, advocacy cannot be mindless and blind. Intelligent advocacy that is discriminatingly in favor of

meeting the educational needs of Indian children and putting their educational welfare first is required.

It is a fact that Indian control of schools is becoming a reality. It is not a point for discussion. A contemporary approach to the basic adjustments to this fact is what is proposed through this paper.

## NOTES

[1]Lawrence A. Cremin, Traditions of American Education, New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1977, p. 134.

[2]William J. Benham, "A Philosophy of Indian Education", Journal of American Indian Education, Vol. 15, Number 1, October 1975, pp. 1-3.

[3]William J. Benham, "Education in the Bureau of Indian Affairs," U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Education Resources Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Research and Evaluation Report Series No. 52, July 1, 1977, p. 12. The Fiscal Year 1978 Appropriation figure comes from the Conference Committee Report on Interior and Related Agencies for the 1978 Appropriations.

[4]S. Lyman Tyler, A History of Indian Policy, Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1973, pp. 234-239.

[5]Op. cit., Benham, p. 18.

[6]American Indian Policy Review Commission (AIPRC), Report on Indian Education, Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1976, p. 85. Also, of this same report see Earl J. Barlow Appendix A. p. 305.

[7]Op. cit., Benham, p. 17. Also see Theodore W. Taylor, The States and Their Indian Citizens, Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1972, p. 1 and pp. 42-43.

[8]U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs Request for Supplemental Appropriations, February 1977, and internal unpublished memo document. Op. cit., AIPRC, Chap. VI, B, "Education Needs and Problems of Non-Federally Recognized Indians," pp. 197-232.

[9]Lewis Meriam, The Problems of Indian Administration, Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1928.

[10]Op. cit., Benham, pp. 30-41